

Amendments to the Claims:

The following claims will replace all prior versions of the claims in this application (in the unlikely event that no claims follow herein, the previously pending claims will remain):

1-28. (Cancelled).

29. (Original) A method of decreasing drag of a body passing subsonically along a direction through a fluid, comprising the steps of:

emitting energy along an extended path in the fluid;
heating fluid along the path to decrease the density of fluid around the path and to form a volume of heated fluid expanding outwardly from the path; and
directing the path parallel to the direction the body passes through the fluid, wherein the body passes through the volume of decreased-density heated fluid and whereby the reduction of density of the fluid decreases the drag on the body, and
the heating of the fluid at different points along the path occurs simultaneously.

30. (Original) The method according to claim 29, wherein electromagnetic energy heats the fluid along the path.

31. (Original) The method according to claim 29, further comprising the step of repeating said steps of emitting energy, heating fluid, and directing the path.

32. (Original) The method according to claim 29, wherein multiple paths are formed within the fluid.

33. (Original) A method of decreasing drag of a body passing subsonically along a direction through a fluid, comprising the steps of:

emitting energy along an extended path in the fluid;
heating fluid along the path to decrease the density of fluid around the path and to form a volume of heated fluid expanding outwardly from the path; and

directing the path parallel to the direction the body passes through the fluid, wherein the body passes through the volume of decreased-density heated fluid and whereby the reduction of density of the fluid decreases the drag on the body, and wherein the fluid includes a liquid.

34. (Original) A method of decreasing drag of a body passing subsonically along a direction through a fluid, comprising the steps of:

emitting energy along an extended path in the fluid;

heating fluid along the path to decrease the density of fluid around the path and to form a volume of heated fluid expanding outwardly from the path;

actively changing a direction of the path through the fluid; and

directing the path parallel to the direction the body passes through the fluid, wherein the body passes through the volume of decreased-density heated fluid and whereby the reduction of density of the fluid decreases the drag on the body.

35. (Original) The method according to claim 34, wherein the step of heating the fluid causes lateral movement of the fluid away from an area in the fluid to which the energy is applied.

36-42. (Cancelled).

43. (Original) A method of decreasing drag of a body passing transonically along a direction through a fluid, comprising the steps of:

emitting energy along an extended path in the fluid;

heating fluid along the path to decrease the density of fluid around the path and to form a volume of heated fluid expanding outwardly from the path; and

directing the path parallel to the direction the body passes through the fluid, wherein the body passes through the volume of decreased-density heated fluid and whereby the reduction of density of the fluid decreases the drag on the body, and

the heating of the fluid at different points along the path occurs simultaneously.

44. (Original) The method according to claim 43, wherein electromagnetic energy heats the fluid along the path.
45. (Original) The method according to claim 43, further comprising the step of repeating said steps of emitting energy, heating fluid, and directing the path.
46. (Original) The method according to claim 43, wherein multiple paths are formed within the fluid.
47. (Original) A method of decreasing drag of a body passing transonically along a direction through a fluid, comprising the steps of:
emitting energy along an extended path in the fluid;
heating fluid along the path to decrease the density of fluid around the path and to form a volume of heated fluid expanding outwardly from the path; and
directing the path parallel to the direction the body passes through the fluid, wherein the body passes through the volume of decreased-density heated fluid and whereby the reduction of density of the fluid decreases the drag on the body, and wherein the fluid includes a liquid.
48. (Original) A method of decreasing drag of a body passing transonically along a direction through a fluid, comprising the steps of:
emitting energy along an extended path in the fluid;
heating fluid along the path to decrease the density of fluid around the path and to form a volume of heated fluid expanding outwardly from the path;
actively changing a direction of the path through the fluid; and
directing the path parallel to the direction the body passes through the fluid, wherein the body passes through the volume of decreased-density heated fluid and whereby the reduction of density of the fluid decreases the drag on the body.
49. (Original) The method according to claim 48, wherein the step of heating the fluid causes lateral movement of the fluid away from an area in the fluid to which the energy is applied.

50. (Cancelled).

51. (Cancelled).

52. (Currently Amended) A method of decreasing drag of a body passing along a direction through a fluid, comprising the steps of:

emitting energy through an aerodynamic window along an extended path in the fluid, wherein the aerodynamic window maintains a pressure gradient between a controlled atmosphere cavity within the body and the external atmosphere;

heating fluid along the path to decrease the density of fluid around the path and to form a volume of heated fluid expanding outwardly from the path; and

directing the path parallel to the direction the body passes through the fluid, wherein the body passes through the volume of decreased-density heated fluid and whereby the reduction of density of the fluid decreases the drag on the body, and

the heating of the fluid at different points along the path occurs simultaneously.

53. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 29, wherein said energy is emitted from said body.

54. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 33, wherein said energy is emitted from said body.

55. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 34, wherein said energy is emitted from said body.

56. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 43, wherein said energy is emitted from said body.

57. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 47, wherein said energy is emitted from said body.

58. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 48, wherein said energy is emitted from said body.

59. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 52, wherein said energy is emitted from said body.

60. (Previously Presented) A method of forming a channel in a fluid, comprising the steps of:

emitting energy along an extended path in the fluid, wherein said energy is emitted from a body moving subsonically through said fluid;

heating fluid along the path to decrease the density of fluid around the path and to form a volume of heated fluid expanding outwardly from the path to create a channel of decreased-density heated fluid; and

directing the path parallel to the direction the body moves through the fluid, wherein the body moves through the channel, and
the heating of the fluid at different points along the path occurs simultaneously.

61. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 60, wherein the fluid includes a liquid.

62. (Previously Presented) A method of forming a channel in a fluid, comprising the steps of:

emitting energy along an extended path in the fluid, wherein said energy is emitted from a body moving subsonically through said fluid;

heating fluid along the path to decrease the density of fluid around the path and to form a volume of heated fluid expanding outwardly from the path to create a channel of decreased-density heated fluid;

actively changing a direction of the path through the fluid; and
directing the path parallel to the direction the body moves through the fluid, wherein the body moves through the channel.

63. (Previously Presented) A method of forming a channel in a fluid, comprising the steps of:

emitting energy along an extended path in the fluid, wherein said energy is emitted from a body moving transonically through said fluid;

heating fluid along the path to decrease the density of fluid around the path and to form a volume of heated fluid expanding outwardly from the path to create a channel of decreased-density heated fluid; and

directing the path parallel to the direction the body moves through the fluid, wherein the body moves through the channel, and

the heating of the fluid at different points along the path occurs simultaneously.

64. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 60, wherein the fluid includes a liquid.

65. (Previously Presented) A method of forming a channel in a fluid, comprising the steps of:

emitting energy along an extended path in the fluid, wherein said energy is emitted from a body moving transonically through said fluid;

heating fluid along the path to decrease the density of fluid around the path and to form a volume of heated fluid expanding outwardly from the path to create a channel of decreased-density heated fluid;

actively changing a direction of the path through the fluid; and

directing the path parallel to the direction the body moves through the fluid, wherein the body moves through the channel.

66. (Previously Presented) A method of forming a channel in a fluid, comprising the steps of:

emitting energy through an aerodynamic window along an extended path in the fluid, wherein said energy is emitted from a moving body;

heating fluid along the path to decrease the density of fluid around the path and to form a volume of heated fluid expanding outwardly from the path to create a channel of decreased-density heated fluid; and

directing the path parallel to the direction the body moves through the fluid,
wherein the body moves through the channel, and
the heating of the fluid at different points along the path occurs
simultaneously.

67-76. (Cancelled).

77. (New) The method according to claim 52, wherein the aerodynamic window comprises a gas stream that is roughly transverse to the emitting energy.

78. (New) The method according to claim 52, wherein the body is traveling transonically or subsonically.